

Apr. 15 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

the President referred to President Kim Yong-sam of South Korea. The press release issued by the Office of the Press Secretary did not include the

complete opening question. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Kim Yong-sam of South Korea in Cheju *April 16, 1996*

Q. Good morning, sir.

The President. Good morning. Did you get some sleep?

Q. A little bit. Mr. President, do you think the start of these four-way talks could really bring peace to this peninsula? Are you encouraged that these four-way talks could lead to peace? What about the situation along the border between Israel and Lebanon; anything the United States can do to stop that fighting?

The President. We're going to answer questions, you know, after our meeting; but we're working very hard on that and we've been at it for a couple of days now, and we're doing the best we can.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:04 a.m. in the garden at the Shilla Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters During Discussions With President Kim Yong-sam of South Korea in Cheju *April 16, 1996*

Q. President Kim, are you excited about the opportunity for a breakthrough with the dialog between North and South Korea?

President Kim. Yes. I think that there is a possibility.

Q. And do you welcome the fact that China might participate as well?

President Kim. Well, we'll have a chance to talk about it later at the press conference.

Q. Mr. President, was it as pretty down on the beach as it looked from up above?

President Clinton. Yes. I felt like a honeymooner again.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:20 a.m. in the garden at the Shilla Hotel. President Kim spoke in Korean, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference With President Kim Yong-sam of South Korea in Cheju *April 16, 1996*

President Kim. Ladies and gentlemen of the press, on behalf of the people of the Republic of Korea, I would again like to extend a heartfelt welcome to President and Mrs. Bill Clinton who are visiting our country today.

President Clinton and I have held five summit meetings since I became President of the Republic of Korea in 1993 and have worked together steadily to develop Korea-U.S. relations into a mature partnership. President Clinton's

visit to Korea today will further strengthen the solid alliance between our two countries. It also offers an opportunity to reaffirm the strategic importance of our bilateral relations for the Asia-Pacific era in the 21st century.

President Clinton and I held indepth discussions for about an hour on the overall situation on the Korean Peninsula, including the recent North Korean provocations in the truce village of Panmunjom. President Clinton and I shared serious concern over the fact that North Korean authorities have recently tried to unilaterally undermine the armistice agreement and violated the agreement through military maneuvering in the joint security area. We agreed on the great importance of maintaining vigilance and strong joint Korea-U.S. defense posture in order to cope with any possible provocations swiftly and firmly. We have also agreed that the armistice agreement should be maintained and observed until a new system for peace is established. We share the view that the problem of building a permanent regime of peace should be resolved through the efforts initiated by the parties directly involved in the Korean problems themselves.

Based upon such considerations, President Clinton and I have decided to make an important proposal in order to defuse the recently created tensions around the Korean Peninsula and to establish a permanent regime of peace in Korea. Today we have agreed to convene without any preconditions and as soon as possible, and to make a joint announcement of a four-party meeting in which the two Koreas, the direct parties concerned to the Korean questions, and the United States and China, the relevant parties to the Korean armistice agreement, would participate.

We hope that through the four-party meeting we can facilitate dialog and exchanges between the two Koreas, reduce tensions between the two sides, and discuss various ways to establish a permanent regime of peace in the Korean Peninsula. It is the sincere expectation of our two leaders that both North Korea and China can show us a positive reaction to our proposal today. At a working luncheon with President Clinton shortly after, we will discuss recent developments in Northeast Asia and ways to promote bilateral relations in various areas.

Finally, I firmly believe that President Clinton's visit to Korea this time is an opportunity for both our countries to bring to a higher level

the enduring and comprehensive partnership which has been established on the basis of our shared value of democracy.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Let me begin by thanking President Kim for inviting me to this magnificent island.

When President Kim was in Washington last summer, I pledged to him that America would always stand by the unshakable alliance between our two countries, an alliance based on a history of shared sacrifice and a future of common purpose. The United States is fully committed to the defense of South Korea, and we are determined to do everything we can to help to secure a stable and permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. That is why I am here today. The United States and South Korea are proposing a new four-party peace process that can lead to permanent peace. It would begin as soon as possible, and there are no preconditions.

North Korea has said it wants peace. This is our proposal to achieve it. And we hope and expect Pyongyang will take it seriously. The dream of peace lies deep in the heart of all the Korean people, North and South. Realizing that dream will take hard work, patience, and a real willingness to focus on the future. But the benefits to all the Korean people are more than worth the effort. We ask the Government and the people of North Korea to join us in this quest. We would also welcome China's participation as the other signatory of the Korean armistice.

It has been 43 years since the armistice was signed. There have been tensions ever since. North Korea's recent incursions into the joint security area reminds us again that peace on the peninsula is fragile. Any violation of the armistice increases the danger of an accident, a mistake, or a miscalculation that could have grave consequences. That is why the United States maintains a high level of vigilance and readiness on the Korean Peninsula. That is why our troops stand shoulder to shoulder with our South Korean allies. We must maintain the existing armistice agreement until a new peace accord is reached.

We are also ready to do whatever we can to help to reach such an agreement. But let me be very clear: Establishing that peace is the responsibility of the Korean people, North and South. The United States will support and facilitate the peace process. But we will not negotiate

a separate peace treaty with North Korea. The future of the Korean Peninsula lies in the hands of its people.

The partnership between the United States and South Korea is grounded in our shared security concerns, but it extends well beyond them to our many other shared interests. Together we are cooperating in economic efforts that will benefit all our people, in peacekeeping efforts, and in diplomacy around the world. Ours is an alliance for all times, good and bad, and it is stronger than ever.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Paul [Paul Basken, United Press International].

Korean Peace Process

Q. Given North Korea's actions over the last few days, which you noticed, and its rigid adherence to an authoritarian style of leadership for many years, do you have any basis for really believing North Korea is ready to change its outlook and its way of doing business?

President Clinton. Well, I think there are two reasons, and perhaps President Kim would like to comment on this as well. But first of all, the North has said for some time that it does want peace. And secondly, just a few days ago, the North—a minister of the North Korean Government acknowledged the importance of maintaining the armistice until a new peace agreement can be put in place.

I would caution that we should not expect an immediate positive response. I would be happy if it came. But I think it's important that we put this offer out there, let it stand, and be patient.

Q. A question to President Kim Yong-sam. It has been understood that the proposal of the four-party meeting has been conveyed to North Korea and China already, and if there are any response coming from North Korea about this. And secondly, how President Kim looks at the prospects of the success of this four-party meeting. And in case North Korea does not respond positively, and instead continues to demand a direct talk with the United States, what will be the measures to be taken against it?

President Kim. Yes, we have indeed conveyed our proposal of four-party meeting to China, courteously and with a lot of substance in there. And I've already sent my long letter to President Jiang Zemin of China explaining the ideas.

With regard to North Korea, we sent a message to the North on Sunday. About your question of what we can do in case North Korea does not accept the proposal, of course, we do not expect that North Korea can respond to our proposal positively tomorrow. But it is very clear from my meeting with President Clinton today that the United States would not engage in dialog with North Korea separately and will not discuss anything outside these issues. So there is no possibility at all that that kind of exclusive U.S.-North Korea bilateral talks can occur.

So we will be very patient. Time is on our side, and I think that this is perhaps the last choice that North Korea can make to resolve the Korean question. And I believe that eventually North Korea will accept our proposal.

President Clinton. If I might, I'd just like to make one brief comment in response to the question to support what President Kim has said. We are strong, prepared, and united with our South Korean ally in our commitment to the defense of South Korea, first. And second, we have made it abundantly clear that there will be no separate agreement between North Korea and the United States on matters covered by the armistice. So I would hope that the people of South Korea would see this move on President Kim's part as a real example of leadership and strength, because we are united, we are firm, our position is clear, and we are simply trying to respond to the need for peace and North Korea's expression that they would like to have peace.

Q. It is my understanding so far that the deal will be parallel approaches to North Korea, that is, U.S.-North Korea talks on one hand and North-South dialog on the other. And our concern is whether North Koreans might make some miscalculations regarding the recent situations and therefore—and especially in view of the recent developments that North Koreans have taken. And we are wondering whether the four-party proposal is sort of a weak approach to North Koreans who have been so adamant to any accommodation of our proposals in the past.

President Clinton. Well, I would like to make two points in response. First of all, we have for some time had contacts with the North Koreans relating to the remains of our soldiers and the question of missiles and the desire of the United States to lead the world in minimiz-

ing the danger that missile technology proliferation poses to the world. But secondly, we have made it absolutely clear that we will not have any talks nor will we negotiate any agreement on any matter covered by the armistice agreement. We will not do that.

The four-party talks are simply a way of providing a framework within which the South and the North can ultimately agree on the terms of peace in the same way that the armistice talks provided that framework 43 years ago. And if the United States can play a positive role in that, we want to. We would like it if the Chinese would do the same. But in the end, the Korean people are going to have to make peace for themselves and their future.

North Korea

Q. I would like to ask President Kim, as well as President Clinton, about your assessment of the situation, what is going on in North Korea. We hear reports about severe food shortages and fuel shortages. How dire is the situation, and do you think that this might be a catalyst or an inducement to bring North Korea to these talks that you are talking about this morning?

President Kim. With regard to your question, my answer is that, yes, it is true that within North Korea there is a serious shortage of food and energy sources, and things are getting worse. And in fact, they are running short of so many things. And politically we don't think that the situation is stable, and economically it is a very uncertain regime.

If I can make an analogy to the attitudes of North Korea in comparison with the weather forecasting, in fact, today we are going to have another very sunshiny day, because the weather forecast said that it was going to rain today. So we could have done our press conference inside. I think the same can be applied to the attitude of North Korea.

President Clinton. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press], with regard to the question you asked, I don't have a lot to add to what President Kim said, except to say that sometimes when countries are in difficult straits—just like people when they're in difficult straits—it is more difficult, not easier, to make agreements. So I don't know that the present difficulties in North Korea will change the negotiating posture of the North Koreans in favor of peace. What I would say to them is President Kim and I are making a good-faith effort here. I was impressed that he took this initiative; I was glad to join him with it. And it is clearly in the long-term interest of the people of North Korea to make peace. And so I would implore them to do this and to accept this offer not just because of the present difficulties but because it is the right thing to do for all the people of the Korean Peninsula over the long run.

NOTE: The President's 118th news conference began at 12:37 p.m. in the garden at the Shilla Hotel. President Kim spoke in Korean, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan in Tokyo

April 17, 1996

Prime Minister Hashimoto. Right in front of you, I and President Clinton signed two documents. One is the message to the peoples of Japan and the United States that lays down the direction in which the two countries should, together, proceed towards the 21st century. And the second is the Japan-U.S. Declaration on Security.

The message to the peoples of Japan and the United States summarizes how important the Japan-U.S. bilateral relationships are for our

peoples and how our two countries will cooperate on a future agenda by referring to the preciousness of democracy and freedom, bilateral cooperation on regional issues, cooperation for U.N. reform, and on disarmament and on our economic relations and how we shall cooperate with each other in these respects.

The Japan-U.S. Declaration on Security reaffirms that the Japan-U.S. security setup will continue to play an important role, as in the past, in preserving security, peace, and stability in